

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for managing the use of electronic content, the system including:
  - an electronic appliance for (a) receiving encoded content and encoded control information, the encoded control information specifying, at least in part, how a decoded version of the encoded content may be used, and (b) rendering the encoded content and the encoded control information through an output of the electronic appliance;
  - a retrofitting appliance for (a) decoding, at least in part, the encoded control information to obtain a decoded version of the encoded control information, and (b) using the decoded control information to at least in part govern the use of decoded content corresponding to the encoded content; and
  - an output device connected to an output of the retrofitting appliance for presenting decoded content to a user of the electronic appliance.
2. A system as in claim 1, in which the electronic appliance is selected from the group consisting of: CD player, DVD player, video cassette player, and television set-top box.
3. A method for managing the use of electronic content, the method including:
  - receiving encoded electronic content and encoded control information at a first electronic appliance, the encoded electronic content and encoded control information forming part of a data signal encoded in a rendering format supported by the first electronic appliance;
  - rendering the encoded electronic content and encoded control information through the output of the first electronic appliance;

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- receiving the rendered electronic content and control information at a second electronic appliance;
  - decoding the rendered electronic content and control information to recover decoded electronic content and decoded control information;
  - using the decoded control information to determine whether or not to permit at least one use of the decoded electronic content;
  - transmitting the decoded electronic content to an output device if the at least one use is permitted.
4. A method as in claim 3, in which the encoded electronic content and encoded control information is received by the first electronic appliance in digital format, and in which the rendered electronic content and control information comprises an analog signal.
  5. A method as in claim 4, in which decoding the rendered electronic content and control information includes:
    - performing an analog-to-digital conversion on the rendered electronic content and control information to obtain a digital signal.
  6. A method as in claim 5, in which decoding the rendered electronic content and control information further includes:
    - decrypting the digital signal to obtain a decrypted digital signal.
  7. A method as in claim 5, in which decoding the rendered electronic content and control information further includes:
    - applying an error-correction transformation on the digital signal.
  8. A method as in claim 6, in which decoding the rendered electronic content and control information further includes:

- decompressing the decrypted digital signal.
9. A method as in claim 3, in which the first electronic appliance is selected from the group consisting of: television set-top box; compact disc player; digital versatile disc player; cellular telephone; personal digital assistant; and personal computer.
  10. A method as in claim 3, in which the encoded electronic content and encoded control information is received by the first electronic appliance in a format selected from the group consisting of: Red Book CD format; MPEG-1 format; MPEG-2 format; MPEG-3 format; MPEG-4 format; and DVD format.